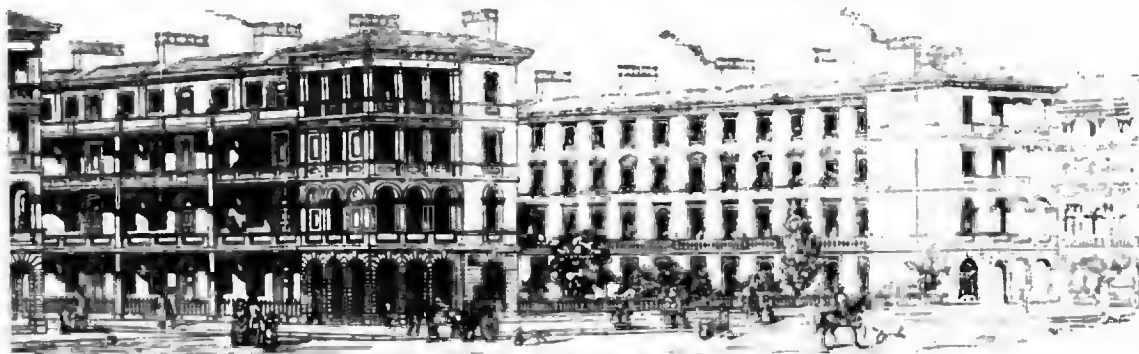
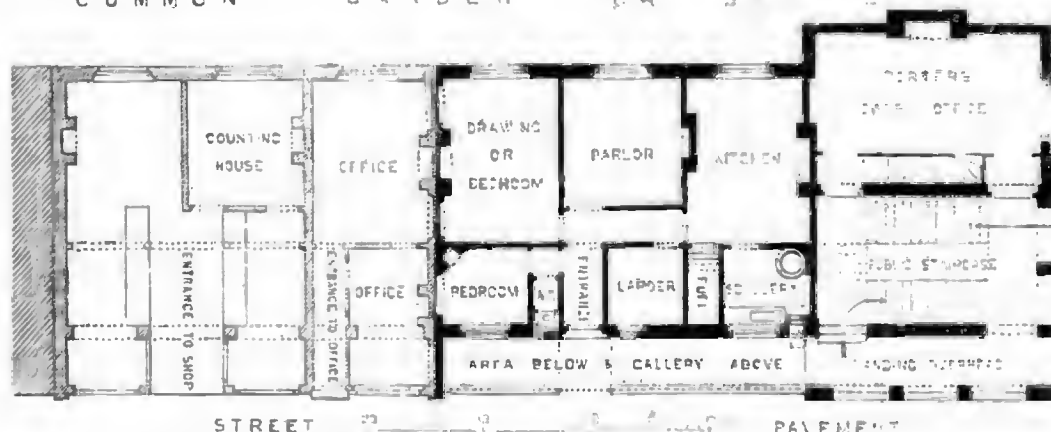


## "MODEL" TOWN HOUSES FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES.



VIEW SHOWING PUBLIC STAIRCASES AND GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE STREETS AND SQUARES.

COMMON GARDEN OR



PLAN OF ONE EXTREMITY OF A TERRACE, THE LIGHT PORTION EXHIBITING ONE BLOCK ARRANGED AS A SHOP AND OFFICE.

and orderly dwelling, is it surprising if the lady of the house settle down to the slovenly standard of her lodgers, or the lodgers to the lady's, as the case may be, to the scandal of their respective country cousins? It is by no means an uncommon thing to hear of a professional man in practice residing at upwards of eighty or a hundred pounds a-year a large house, and occupying it, with his wife and children, one male and a couple of female servants; with a pair of lodgers on his first floor, a married couple on his second, and a single lodger on his third floor. Imagine a state of existence more undignified, unreal, or uncomfortable than this,—or the advent of typhus into such a dwelling!

As to the construction of metropolitan dwelling-houses, totally irrespective of their unsuitable arrangement or plan, it has been shown by many writers to be truly detestable: deprive them of but one good quality (secured to them by Act of Parliament), their non-liability, by the possession of compulsorily sound party and external walls, to ignite one another, and it is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more defective. *Strength* they have not (of course there are exceptions in this as in every rule), for even the vulgar element of *equilibrium* is denied them; walls rest not on walls nor even partitions on partitions, though, strange to say, roofs do; in fact, as respects the *walls* (save as it relates to the before-mentioned circumscribing brickwork required by the Legislature), it and the word "*foundation*" might well be expunged from our house-builders' vocabulary. Thus, to say nothing of *durability*, the absence of which we perhaps owe to the existence of short leases, your ordinary London dwelling is even deficient in *safety*,—as may be seen from the awful frequency and rapidity with which their necessarily wooden

construction subjects them to total demolition by fire. In these cases the salvage of furniture, or such like property, is out of the question, the oft recurring sacrifice of human life shocking to contemplate. I myself have seen in two cases—that of Raggett's Hotel, in Dover-street, and of Professor Farey's house, in Guildford-street, the window blinds and curtains of the gutted house fluttering next day from the windows,—a sad evidence of the sudden rapidity with which, in each case, the destruction of life and property was effected. Indeed, not only is it often that these fires are attended with loss of life, but really seldom that they occur without it; and, meantime, as any one may see around the outskirts of the metropolis, we go on building on the very same plan as before, with deal staircases and quarter partitions, side by side, admirably contrived—to burn; and at the close of each day tall ghost-like fire-escapes, which, by-the-bye, do not always escape combustion themselves, traverse the streets; dismally reminding one of the probability there is that, ere the sun return, some hapless dweller in their allotted district, who has entered his abode by the street door, may have to make his exit by an upper window.

It may be thought this is an exaggerated picture of the evils arising out of our present mode of house building; but, though in many cases they may be said to exist greatly mitigated by circumstances, it is undeniable that the system condemned induces more or less the state of things here described; and that to the majority of the inhabitants of our provincial towns it is almost unknown. That this is the case, at least with reference to the last evil adverted to, let us look at Manchester, next to the metropolis the most important, most populous city we have. Here, in the

cases of mill or warehouse property, conflagrations the most appalling occur; and yet the destruction of dwelling-house property is, compared with what we experience in London, signally rare. Mr. Rose, for very many years the able comptroller of the Manchester Fire Brigade, has kindly favoured me with the following statement, in reply to two questions put to him. He says—"I do not know of more than one instance where a building, solely occupied as a dwelling-house, was entirely destroyed by fire during a period of twenty years; and such fires are very rarely attended with the death by fire of any of the inmates."

It would avail little to dilate on the un-architectural external appearance of our houses, which, though very greatly induced by the infrequency with which architects are called in to design and direct their construction, is in some measure attributable to their ichnographic arrangement; nor, however consistent it might be with the practice of modern criticism, would it be fair to close these observations, without making some attempt to suggest a remedy for the evils complained of. Before doing this, however, it will be well to briefly notice one or two efforts lately made with this laudable object: I allude particularly to the "model lodging-houses for the labouring classes."

A large stack of these has lately been built in the parish of St. Pancras, with eminent success as a speculation: however, save the substitution of stone for wooden staircases, and the provision of a kitchen, scullery, water-closet, and dust-hole on one floor, there is little in the plan to distinguish it from the ordinary dwelling-house arrangements. Yet even with these novelties (so to term them) the increase of comfort, as compared